

REMARKS

The non-final Office Action mailed January 12, 2005 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1, 8 and 22 have been amended and claims 2 and 9 have been canceled. Claims 1, 3-8 and 10-27 are pending in the application. Claims 15-21 and 24-26 are allowed.

In paragraph three on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-14, 22, 23, and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over DeBry et al. (Patent No. 6,538,760).

Applicants respectfully traverse the § 102(e) rejection, but in the interest of expediting prosecution have amended claims 1, 8 and 22 to include the subject matter recited in allowed claim 15. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 8 and 22 are patentable over the cited references.

Dependent claims 2-7, 9-14 and 23 are also patentable over the references because they incorporate all of the limitations of the corresponding independent claims 1, 8 and 22. Further, dependent claims 2-7, 9-14 and 23 recite additional novel elements and limitations. Applicants reserve the right to argue independently the patentability of these additional novel aspects. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-7, 9-14 and 23 are patentable over the cited references.

On the basis of the above remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims are in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of this application and its allowance are requested. Please charge/credit Deposit Account No. 50-0996 (IBMN.006US01) for any deficiencies/overpayments.

If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicant's attorney of record, David W. Lynch at 651-686-6633 Ext 116.

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